

App. Serial No.: 10/815,376
Atty. Docket No.: 0061-011

IN THE CLAIMS

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Please amend the claims as follows:

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1 1. (currently amended) An ankle gapping device comprising:
2 a lower leg engaging apparatus;
3 a foot engaging apparatus; and
4 a biasing member disposed between said lower leg engaging apparatus and said foot
5 engaging apparatus to bias said lower leg engaging apparatus and said foot
6 engaging apparatus away from each other, said biasing member exerting a
7 continuous force.

1 2. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said biasing
2 member is pneumatic.

1 3. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 2, further comprising an air
2 pump coupled to provide compressed air to said pneumatic biasing member.

1 4. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 2, wherein said biasing
2 member includes an inflatable tube.

1 5. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 4, wherein said inflatable tube
2 is shaped as a sectioned torus.

1 6. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 4, wherein said inflatable tube
2 is adapted to generally surround an ankle, and includes a break to facilitate positioning around
3 said ankle.

1 7. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said foot engaging
2 apparatus includes a receiving portion adapted to accept said biasing member.

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1 8. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 7, wherein said receiving
2 portion includes a channel formed in a top portion of said foot engaging apparatus.

1 9. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 7, wherein said receiving
2 portion is substantially rigid.

1 10. (previously presented) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said
2 foot engaging apparatus comprises a first surface adapted to abut a dorsal portion of a foot.

1 11. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 10, wherein said foot
2 engaging apparatus comprises a second surface adapted to abut a heel.

1 12. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 11, wherein at least one of
2 said first and second surfaces is arched.

1 13. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 12, wherein both of said first
2 and second surfaces are arched.

1 14. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 11, wherein:
2 said first surface is on a first portion of said foot engaging apparatus;
3 said second surface is on a second portion of said foot engaging apparatus; and
4 said first portion of said foot engaging apparatus is flexibly coupled to said second
5 portion of said foot engaging apparatus.

1 15. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 14, further comprising a
2 hinge connecting said first portion of said foot engaging apparatus to said second portion of said
3 foot engaging apparatus.

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1 16. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 14, comprising a securing
2 device for securing said first portion of said foot engaging apparatus to said second portion of
3 said foot engaging apparatus about said foot.

1 17. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said leg engaging
2 apparatus includes a receiving portion adapted to accept said biasing member.

1 18. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 17, wherein said receiving
2 portion includes a channel formed in a top portion of said leg engaging apparatus.

1 19. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 17, wherein said receiving
2 portion is rigid.

1 20. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 19, wherein said receiving
2 portion is flared sufficiently to contain a top portion of said biasing member.

1 21. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said leg engaging
2 apparatus is formed of material sufficiently rigid to transfer force exerted by said biasing
3 member to a lower leg of a user.

1 22. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said leg engaging
2 apparatus is tapered from an upper portion to a lower portion.

1 23. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 22, wherein said leg
2 engaging apparatus is contoured to conform a human lower leg.

1 24. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said leg engaging
2 apparatus is sectioned to facilitate application and removal.

1 25. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 24, wherein said leg
2 engaging apparatus includes at least two sections.

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1 26. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 25, wherein said at least two
2 sections are flexibly coupled together.

1 27. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 26, wherein said at least two
2 sections are flexibly coupled together by a hinge.

1 28. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 26,further comprising a
2 securing member adapted to tightly secure said at least two sections about said leg.

1 29. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 28, wherein said securing
2 member comprises hook and loop fastener material.

1 30. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 25, wherein said leg
2 engaging apparatus comprises a semi rigid elastic wrap.

1 31. (previously presented) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein:
2 said foot engaging apparatus defines a seat formed to accept a bottom portion of said
3 biasing member; and
4 said leg engaging apparatus defines a seat formed to accept a top portion of said
5 biasing member.

1 32. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 31, wherein said biasing
2 member is an inflatable tube.

1 33. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said biasing
2 member is capable of exerting a force sufficient to cause separation of an ankle joint.

1 34. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said lower leg
2 engaging apparatus comprises means for engaging the lower leg of a human being.

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1 35. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said foot
2 engaging apparatus comprises means for engaging a human foot.

1 36. (original) An ankle gapping device according to Claim 1, wherein said biasing
2 member comprises means for pushing said lower leg engaging apparatus and said foot engaging
3 apparatus apart from one another.

1 37. (currently amended) A method for gapping an ankle joint, comprising:
2 applying a foot engaging apparatus to a person's foot;
3 applying a leg engaging apparatus to the person's leg;
4 disposing a biasing member between said foot engaging apparatus and said leg
5 engaging apparatus; and
6 actuating said biasing member to urge said foot engaging apparatus and said leg
7 engaging apparatus apart from one another, said biasing member exerting a
8 continuous force.

1 38. (original) A method for gapping an ankle joint according to claim 37, wherein said
2 step of applying said foot engaging apparatus to said foot includes positioning a first portion of
3 said foot engaging apparatus on a dorsal side of said foot and positioning a second portion of
4 said foot engaging apparatus on a heel of said foot.

1 39. (original) A method for gapping an ankle joint according to claim 37, wherein said
2 step of applying said leg engaging apparatus to said leg includes wrapping said leg engaging
3 apparatus around the lower leg.

1 40. (original) A method for gapping an ankle joint according to claim 37, wherein said
2 step of disposing said biasing member between said foot engaging apparatus and said leg
3 engaging apparatus includes positioning an inflatable tube between said foot engaging apparatus
4 and said leg engaging apparatus.

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1 41. (original) A method for gapping an ankle joint according to claim 40, wherein said
2 step of actuating said biasing member includes pumping fluid into said inflatable tube.

1 42. (currently amended) An ankle gapping device comprising:
2 lower leg engaging means;
3 foot engaging means; and
4 means for continuously pushing said lower leg engaging means and said foot
5 engaging means in opposite directions.